

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4661

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, TH, US

SUBJECT: PHAITOON CRUACAO'S POLITICAL VIEWS

FOLLOWING RECEIVED ACTION BANGKOK INFO UDORN CMDR KO KHA AIR  
STATION COMUSMACTHAI SONGKHLA FROM CHIANG MAI MARCH 21.  
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHIANG MAI 142

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, TH, US

SUBJECT: PHAITOON CRUACAO'S POLITICAL VIEWS

REFS: A. CHIANG MAI MEMCON JUNE 15, 1971

B. CHIANG MAI MEMCON JULY 5, 1971

DURING DISCUSSIONS IN LAMPANG MARCH 20, DR. PHAITOON  
CRUACAO, EX-LAMPANG MP AND LEADER OF DEMOCRATIC FRONT  
PARTY, EXPRESSED FOLLOWING VIEWS:

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1. HIS ROLE. PHAITOON IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON A

UNION OF LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTIES TO BE HEADED BY THEP CHOTNUCHIT, LEADER OF ECONOMIST UNITED FRONT (SEE FTB 19,436). PHAITOON SAYS COALITION WILL HAVE "SOCIALIST" OUTLOOK. HE EXPECTS THEP TO BE LEADER, BUT NOTED THAT THEP IS ALREADY 67 AND NOT IN STRONG HEALTH, HENCE UNABLE STAND UP TO DAILY RIGORS OF PARTY FLOOR LEADER IN PARLIAMENT. PHAITOON WANTS TO BE SECRETARY-GENERAL.

2. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (LA). PHAITOON WAS SCORNFUL OF LA MEMBERS; THEY ARE FAR TOO INTERESTED IN CELEBRITY STATUS MEDIA GIVES THEM. HE SAID LA DRAGGING OUT PROMULGATION OF NEW CONSTITUTION AND DOUBTED ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD BEFORE COLD SEASON IF NOT AS LATE AS ("AS EARLY AS", HE CORRECTED) FEBRUARY, 1975. HE BEMOANED RECENT SALARY INCREASE LA HAD PASSED. PROPORTIONALLY IT GIVES TOO MUCH TO HIGHEST-GRADE CIVIL SERVANTS AND TOO LITTLE TO LOWEST. THE NEW REGIME STRUCK HIM MUCH THE SAME AS THE OLD: "WE HAVE MERELY REPLACED THE MILITARY WITH THE INTELLECTUALS."

3. INTELLECTUALS. PHAITOON WITH CORNELL PHD, SHARPLY CRITICIZED THAI INTELLECTUALS. MANY BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS WITH PHD'S FROM THE BEST THAI AND FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES HAVE NO IDEA HOW RURAL OR EVEN LOWER-CLASS URBAN THAI LIVE, NOR DO THEY COMPREHEND THEIR DESIRES. HE SCORNEDED THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION, NOTING THAT THE DRAFTING INTELLECTUALS STIPULATED CREDENTIALS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE UPPER HOUSE WHICH COULD ONLY BE FILLED BY THEMSELVES. "IT WAS ENOUGH TO SULLY THE TITLE OF PHD OF THAILAND FOR YEARS TO COME." HE INCLUDED THE NEW POLITICAL PARTY "CREATED BY BANGKOK PROFESSORS", PHALANG MAI, IN THIS CATEGORY.

4. US-THAI RELATIONS. HE CONSIDERED US-THAI RELATIONS HAD TO ALTER SOMEWHAT, BUT DID NOT WANT ANY DRASTIC CHANGES (SEE REFS A AND B). HE HAD ONLY GOOD WORDS FOR THE NEARBY KO KHA AIRBASE AND PRAISED THE BEHAVIOR OF US SERVICEMEN IN LAMPANG. HOWEVER, HE STATED THAT WHILE US BASES WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE A LOCAL ISSUE IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION, THEY WOULD BE A NATIONAL ISSUE. HE SMILINGLY ANNOUNCED THAT HE INTENDED TO CALL FOR REMOVAL

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OF US BASES DURING THE CAMPAIGN BECAUSE HE THOUGHT THE SLOGAN--USED NATION WIDE--WOULD HELP HIS PARTY.

5. STUDENTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. PHAITOON DISCOUNTED THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN THE ELECTIONS. HE DOUBTED THEY COULD BE ORGANIZED AS A SINGLE PRESSURE GROUP AND THOUGHT RATHER THEY WOULD BE MANIPULATED IN PART BY RIVAL POLITICIANS AS WELL AS BY THE CURSED INTELLECTUALS. WHEN WE INFORMED

HIM OF THE LAMPANG GOVERNOR'S STRONG FEARS OF LOCAL STUDENTS (SEPTTEL FOLLOWS), HE DISMISSED THEM, STATING HE SAW NO WELL-ORGANIZED STUDENT STRENGTH IN LAMPANG. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNOR WOULD NOT BE WORRIED ABOUT STUDENTS IF HE WERE AN ELECTED OFFICIAL. PHAITOON SAID HIS PLATFORM WOULD INCLUDE A DEMAND THAT GOVERNORS AND HIGH LOCAL OFFICIALS BE ELECTED RATHER THAN APPOINTED. DECENTRALIZATION WILL BE ANOTHER PLANK. BANGKOK MAKES TOO MANY DECISIONS WHILE LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE TOO LITTLE VOICE IN THEIR OWN IMMEDIATE AFFAIRS. HE SAID THIS ISSUE WORKED WELL FOR HIM BEFORE.

6. HOW WILL THE ELECTION TURN OUT? ECHOING THE OPINION WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM SEVERAL POLITICIANS HERE , PHAITOON SAID HE EXPECTED ELECTION WILL RESULT IN A WEAK GOVERNMENT, WITH NO ONE PARTY GARNERING A MAJORITY. HE SAID THE MILITARY IS INVOLVED BEHIND THE SCENES WHILE MAINTAINING A WATCH AND WAIT ATTITUDE. HE DISMISSED THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AS DEFEATIST, RESIGNED TO PERENNIAL OPPOSITION. HE FORESAW A NUMBER OF EX-SPT (THE OLD GOVERNMENT PARTY) MP'S FORGING A NEW PARTY BUT DOUBTED THEY COULD ELECT A MAJORITY.

7. PERSONALITIES: (A) DR. PUEY UNGPHAKORN. PHAITOON CALLED PUEY A BUTTERFLY FLITTING FROM GROUP TO GROUP, NOT A SERIOUS CANDIDATE FOR PRIME MINISTER. PUEY WOULD PREFER TO REMAIN OUTSIDE AND CRITICIZE. PHAITOON LIKED THE ORIGINAL SUGGESTION OF A MAN LIKE PUEY FOR PRIME MINISTER SINCE HIS QUALITIES--HONESTY, INTELLIGENCE, HUMILITY-- WERE THE DIRECT OPPOSITE OF THOSE OF THE FORMER REGIME AND TRAITS THEREFORE TO BE ENCOURAGED IN A NEW GOVERNMENT. PUEY, HOWEVER, LACKS THE TOUGHNESS TO LEAD. HE SAID THAT PUEY'S RESPONSE TO A CONFRONTATION OR A FIGHT IS "TO QUIT, TO GIVE UP AND GO TO ENGLAND".

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(B) SENI PRAMOJ: TOO OLD, STILL UNSURE OF HIS POLICIES, CHANGES HIS MIND TOO OFTEN.

(C) KUKRIT PRAMOJ: BRILLIANT, A WONDERFUL MAN-- BUT A JOURNALIST, NOT A POLITICIAN.

(D) SA-NGA KITTIKACHORN: A CLEVER MAN THE "GOOD" KITTIKACHORN. PHAITOON EXPECTS HE WILL RUN AND BE ELECTED FROM HIS FATHER'S OLD DISTRICT IN KHAMPAENGPHET AND PERHAPS PLAY A ROLE IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

(E) PRASERT RUCHIRAWONG: PHAITOON NOTED THAT WHILE PRASERT HAD BEEN EXTREMELY CORRUPT AS POLICE COMMISSIONER, HE HAD NEVERTHELESS ALWAYS BEEN EASY

ON POLITICIANS. THUS, PRASERT HAD A NUMBER OF POLITICAL CHITS ALREADY OUTSTANDING AND COULD COUNT ON REDEEMING THEM. PRASERT HAD ALSO BEEN GIVING MONEY TO VARIOUS GROUPS AND WOULD BE IN A GOOD POSITION WHEN THE NEW GOVERNMENT WAS ELECTED: PRASERT WOULD WIN EASILY IN HIS DISTRICT AND PROBABLY BE A PRIME POWER BROKER IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT.

8 COMMENT: PHAITOON IS POPULAR IN HIS OWN DISTRICT, HAS SUBSTANTIAL BUSINESS AND MINING INTERESTS AND SHOULD BE ELECTED AGAIN EASILY. AS SHOWN FROM SEVERAL OF HIS STATEMENTS, HE IS NOT AN IDEOLOGUE. HE IS LOOKING FOR THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY A ROLE IN WHAT HE SEES AS A VERY FLUID SITUATION. HE NOTED THAT HIS IDEA OF SOCIALISM AND LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTY IN THAILAND PROBABLY WOULD FALL ON THE CONSERVATIVE SIDE OF A WESTERN SPECTRUM. HIS COMMENTS ON ELITISM, WHILE SINCERE, ARE PROBABLY ALSO A GOOD CAMPAIGN TACTIC. HE MENTIONED LAUGHINGLY THAT HIS REAL SURNAME WAS NA-LAMPHUN (INDICATING NORTH THAILAND ROYALTY), AND THAT HE HAD USED IT IN HIS LAST CAMPAIGN. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, SINCE HE WAS GOING TO BE A "SOCIALIST" HE WOULD PROBABLY RUN AS JUST PLAIN OLD CRUACAO.  
MONTGOMERY  
UNQUOTE  
KINTNER

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